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ARCHÆOLOGY AND THE OLD TESTAMENT.

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EVERY seeker after truth will welcome new light on the Bible. To know more accurately the best of all books is a natural and laudable wish. We are living in an age when much important light is being thrown on the sacred Scriptures. A good part of this is due to the varied contributions made by archæology.¹ The discoveries in Assyria, Babylonia, Syria, Palestine, Arabia, and Egypt, have in many ways helped in the interpretation of the Old Testament. The digging has at times gone to a depth of 120 feet. Sometimes several cities have been unearthed, one built over the other. Lachish has been rightly called "a mound of many cities." The objects found differ a good deal. Sometimes temples, palaces, houses, shops, streets, and squares have been unearthed. At other times the discoveries have been of smaller articles, such as pitchers, vases, cups, lamps, rings, bracelets, and seals. The most important finds have been the inscribed tablets. These are usually small and made of clay. When soft, writing was put upon them; they were then baked in the sun so as to become very hard. It is thus that they have endured through so many centuries. Thousands upon thousands of these clay tablets have been discovered. At Tello (Lagash) de Sarzec found something like 30,000; while Dr. Hilprecht estimates the number at Nippur to be about 250,000. Sometimes large slabs from six to ten feet in height are found. These not only contain inscriptions, but in many cases pictures of kings, priests, gods, sacrifices, battles, and booty are found upon them.

¹ Cf. DRIVER in *Authority and Archaeology*; BALL, *Light from the East*; NICOL, *Recent Archaeology and the Bible*; DELITZSCH, *Babel und Bibel*; SCHRADER, *Keilschriften und das Alte Testament* (third edition by Winckler and Zimmern).

A good many of the inscriptions have been read,² but an immense amount of material yet remains untouched, and every year brings many new finds to light. The story³ of the interpretation of the Assyrian and Babylonian inscriptions, covering well-nigh a century, is most interesting, and illustrates the triumph of scholarship over many and varied difficulties. In Egyptology a similar progress has been made, and, as Professor Erman has rightfully said, "the age of deciphering is at an end ; we begin to read."

From the various finds much has been derived to illuminate and supplement the pages of the Old Testament.

Archæology has done much for a better understanding of the Hebrew language, in which the Old Testament was written. This is of great importance, for only as we know the original aright can we translate it accurately into any other language. Of all the Semitic languages, the speech of Assyria and Babylonia is most closely allied to the Hebrew. Especially in lexicography, but also in grammar, has Hebrew derived much from the language spoken by the nations on the Euphrates and the Tigris. Hebrew words and expressions have received a new, fuller, and more accurate meaning. In many cases where the Old Testament text is corrupt, important help has come from the Assyrian toward a more accurate reading. The origin and signification of many proper names⁴ have been explained. The relation of the Hebrew alphabet to that of neighboring Semitic peoples has been shown by monuments found in Moab, Phœnicia and Zinjirli. The origin of the Hebrew letters can probably be traced to the cuneiform of Babylonia. A new discipline has arisen, that of comparative Semitic grammar ; and two eminent scholars⁵ have written books on this theme. Courses on the contribution of Assyrian to Hebrew are now given in some higher institutions of learning.

² *Records of the Past*, New Series, edited by Sayce ; *Keilinschriftliche Bibliothek*, six volumes thus far, edited by Schrader.

³ ROGERS, *History of Babylonia and Assyria* ; KING, *First Steps in Assyrian*.

⁴ NÖLDEKE, art. "Names" in *Encyclopædia Biblica* ; GRAY, *Hebrew Proper Names*.

⁵ The late Dr. William Wright and Dr. Heinrich Zimmern.

Every grammar and dictionary of the Hebrew now shows the important contributions made by archæology. It is very interesting to compare the first edition of Gesenius's *Hebrew Grammar* (1813), with the twenty-seventh revised edition (1902) by Kautzsch; or Gesenius's *Hebrew Dictionary*, first edition (1812), with the thirteenth edition by Buhl, or with that now being edited by Dr. Francis Brown. A like gain has come to all recent commentaries, for they must ever be built on the grammar and the dictionary. The older commentaries were diffuse, errant, polemical, and speculative, while those recently issued are brief, exact, scientific and exegetical.⁶ One scholar has indeed written an archæological commentary on Genesis in which all the matter is derived from archæology. The two monumental Bible dictionaries⁷ recently issued owe their value in no small degree to the results furnished by archæology. Nearly every page is laden with learning derived from the monuments. Indeed, the time has come when no exact student of the Old Testament can afford to neglect, not only the study of Assyrian history, religion, and antiquities, but especially that of the Assyrian language itself. Happily that prince of Assyrian scholars, Dr. Friedrich Delitzsch, in his Assyrian grammar, dictionary and reading book, has put within the reach of all students the tools by which a thorough grasp of this language can be gained.

Many chronological data for the Old Testament have been found in archæology. It is natural that we should wish to know when important events took place, for we can appreciate many facts in the Bible only when we know their time-relation. The Old Testament presents several difficulties in regard to chronology. The time between creation and the call of Abraham is 2,021 years in the Hebrew Old Testament; but in the Greek version it is 3,407. The Hebrew assigns 215 years for the sojourn of the patriarchs in Canaan, and 430 as the time spent in Egypt; while the Septuagint (Exod. 12:40) gives 430 for the whole time

⁶ Compare the *International Critical Commentary* or the *Kurzer Hand-Commentar zum Alten Testament* with any of the earlier commentaries on the Old Testament.

⁷ Edited by Hastings, and by Cheyne and Black.

spent in Canaan and Egypt. Paul (Gal. 3:17) seems to follow the Greek version, while Stephen (Acts 7:6) follows the Hebrew. The 480 years (1 Kings 6:1) from Exodus to Solomon are hard to harmonize with the 410 years of the Judges plus the time covered by the wandering in the desert and the rule of Eli, Samuel, Saul, and David. From the death of Solomon until the fall of Samaria the regnal years of the two kingdoms disagree by twenty years.

Archbishop Ussher, who died in 1656, placed the creation at 4004 B. C., and this date still remains in the margin of many Bibles. A variety of considerations show that this date is wide of the mark. The first Egyptian dynasty must be dated from about 5000 B. C., as the monuments testify;⁸ but even before this period there ruled a number of kings, some of whose names have been recently found. The flint implements of palæolithic man in Egypt take us back to about 7000 B. C. at the very lowest. Professor Hilprecht places the founding of the Bel temple at Nippur not later than 6000 B. C. The memorial tablets of Eannadu and his father Akurgal, governor of Shirpurla (Lagash), must be dated at about 4500 B. C. Most Assyriologists place Sargon I. at 3800 B. C. Several independent lines of proof confirm this antiquity of man upon the earth. Eridu, once on the Persian gulf, is now 130 miles inland. The débris has been filled in at the rate of 100 feet in a year. This would take us back to 6500 B. C. for the founding of Eridu. The Nile deposits about four inches of mud in a century; and the depth now is about thirty feet. This would lead us to a date about 9000 years B. C. Geologists maintain that the rocks testify to an age vastly earlier than 4004. Ethnologists, too, are convinced that man has been much longer on the earth than the date of Ussher would imply.

No chronology is possible in the Old Testament before the time of Abraham, as Professor W. H. Green long ago pointed out. As Hammurabi, who ruled about 2250 B. C. in Babylon, is generally held to be the same person as Amraphel in

⁸ W. MAX MÜLLER, art. "Egypt" in *Encyclopædia Biblica*; PETRIE, *History of Egypt*, and *Encyclopædia Britannica*, art. "Egyptology" in Supplement, Vol. III.

Gen. 14:19, we thus get a date for Abraham. The discovery by Naville of the stone city Pithom (Exod. 1:11) seems to show that the Pharaoh of the oppression was Rameses II. and that the exodus took place under his son Merenptah, about 1250 B.C. After this date very much help comes from Assyria and Babylonia. These nations paid much attention to time reckoning, and have laid for us the foundations of astronomical and mathematical science. The eponym canon extends from 893 to 666 B.C. The Babylonian chronicle begins with Nabunatsir, 747 B.C., and contains much chronological material relating to Babylonia and Assyria. The canon of Ptolemy covers the period from 747 B.C. to Roman times. The historical inscriptions⁹ of Shalmaneser II., Ramman-Nirari III., Tiglath-Pileser III., Sennacherib, Esarhaddon, Nebuchadnezzar, and Cyrus contain direct references to biblical history and settle many dates with absolute accuracy. Scholars¹⁰ constructing chronological tables on the basis of the material furnished by archæology have come to a marked agreement.

Archæology has also brought to us much information concerning many nations otherwise almost unknown. There are mentioned in the Old Testament very many peoples about whose origin, history, and civilization we knew next to nothing. The tenth chapter of Genesis, commonly called "the table of the nations," has been wonderfully illuminated by archæology. It is of course a catalogue of races and not of individuals; and is planned with reference to their geographical position. The Japhetic peoples are placed in the north, Hamitic in the south, and the Shemitic in the east. More than thirty of the names have been found on the monuments,¹¹ and many obscure references have been cleared up. A remarkable example of this is

⁹ WINCKLER, *Keilinschriftliches Textbuch zum Alten Testamente*.

¹⁰ See art. "Chronology" in HASTINGS'S *Dictionary of the Bible*, by CURTIS; in *Encyclopædia Biblica*, by MARTI; in *Encyclopædia Britannica*, Supplement, Vol. III, by DRIVER; in KAUTZSCH, *Outline of History of Literature of Old Testament*; and in ROGERS, *History of Babylonia and Assyria*.

¹¹ JENSEN, "List of Races in Tenth Chapter of Genesis," *S. S. Times*, February 4 and 11, 1899; DELITZSCH, *Paradies*; commentaries on Genesis by HOLTZMANN and GUNKEL.

found in the name Heth (Gen. 10:15). We knew almost nothing about this people except the few scattered references in the Bible. Now we know that they were no other than the Hittites, a people which for centuries ruled a good part of Syria, and had a great empire with important cities at Hamath, Kedesh, and Carchemish. Rameses II. even made a treaty with a Hittite king and married his daughter. Their language, religion, and civilization have been in part recovered. They spoke a non-Semitic tongue and were the ancestors of the present-day Armenians.¹² The monuments often give pictures of the various peoples, so that we can get a tolerably accurate idea of how they looked. The facial types of Elamite, Judean, Israelite, Arab, Assyrian, Babylonian, Egyptian, Hittite, and Phœnician are now well known.¹³ The mental and physical traits of these nations can also be inferred from the inscriptions and pictures.

Thus the various nations mentioned in the Old Testament have been made to live and move before us in a manner which we could not have anticipated. All this is of immense importance for the twelve tribes, since we can understand their history aright only when viewed in relation to the nations surrounding them. We now see that Israel and Judah were subject to the same historic forces as the other nations. They had their victories, defeats, captivities, and releases just as the others.¹⁴ If God brought up Israel out of Egypt, so also did he the Philistines from Caphtor and the Syrians from Kir, as the prophet Amos (9:7) shows. God has been working in all history and among all peoples (Mal. 1:11). From a political point of view the sole importance of the twelve tribes was that they occupied a territory which was debatable ground, a bone of contention, between such nations as Assyria, Babylonia, and Egypt.

Further, all the information about nations in touch with Israel and Judah is of great value in interpreting the Old Testament prophets. They spoke first and foremost to the people of their own time, and must ever be read from this standpoint. The his-

¹² WRIGHT, *Empire of the Hittites*; JENSEN, *Hittiter und Armenier*.

¹³ DELITZSCH, *Babel und Bibel*; BENZINGER, *Hebräische Archæologie*.

¹⁴ PATON, *Syria and Palestine*.

torical situation conditioned the prophetic messages, and they must be studied in connection with the times when the prophets lived. A neglect of this canon has led to some very erroneous interpretation.

Archæology has shown us that art in Israel was largely derived from Egypt. The Hebrews were not an artistic people. Their years of serfdom in Goshen, wanderings in the desert, and centuries of warfare with many tribes in Canaan, prevented any growth in painting, sculpture, and architecture. The Phœnicians, the great traders of antiquity, brought Egyptian art to Israel. The Phœnicians¹⁵ had no art of their own, but borrowed at different times from Egypt, Assyria, Babylonia, and Persia. From about 2000 B. C. to 1200 B. C., Egyptian art ruled in Phœnicia. This was natural, for Egypt then largely controlled Palestine. Probably these same seafaring people carried Egyptian art to Crete, where antiquities have been found which show so clearly Egyptian influence. The Doric column in Greece without doubt had its origin in the pillars found in the rock tombs at Beni Hassan in Egypt. The fourteenth-century Mycenæan civilization was in close touch with the ancient civilization of Egypt. We know on what good terms the kings of Phœnicia were with David and Solomon. At the same period the Phœnician cities were closely allied with Israel. How natural then it is that we should read (*2 Sam. 5:11*), "and Hiram, king of Tyre, sent messengers to David, and cedar trees, and carpenters and masons; and they built David a house." When Solomon wished to construct a temple and other buildings in Jerusalem this same Phœnician king furnished the timber and stones, which received the proper shape largely from Phœnician workmen. So we read (*2 Kings 5:18*): "and Solomon's builders and Hiram's builders and the Gebalites did fashion them, and prepared the timber and the stones to build the house." If one examines the temple as restored by Stade¹⁶ from the biblical

¹⁵ MEYER, art. "Phœnicia" in *Encyclopædia Biblica*; PERROT AND CHIPIEZ, *Histoire de l'art*.

¹⁶ STADE, in *Zeitschrift für alttestamentliche Wissenschaft*, 1883, pp. 129-77; BEN-ZINGER, *Hebraische Archæologie*.

data, it shows clear traces of Egyptian influence. The columns, doors, walls, and roof are a reproduction of those which are found on the banks of the Nile. The whole appearance of the temple shows the fundamental principle of the Egyptian building, namely, the hewn rock. If we compare the ground plan of Solomon's sanctuary with that of Amon's temple at Karnak, the resemblance is close. The fore-hall, holy place and holy of holies in the one correspond to the peristyle, hypostyle, and adytum in the other. The ark with the two inscribed stones has its parallel in the ark of granite which usually contained a stone or wooden image of the god. The various utensils for use in the temple were made by Phoenicians (1 Kings 7:45) and in all likelihood were modeled after Egyptian patterns. The monolith yet standing at the pool of Siloam is thoroughly Egyptian. After the exile the second temple was also built by Phœnician workmen (Ezra 3:7).

Archæology has helped to a right interpretation of the material in the first nine chapters¹⁷ of Genesis. The resemblances between the narratives in Genesis and the legends of Babylonia are very numerous. The record of creation in Gen. 1:1—2:4 has many points of agreement with the Babylonian version. The Babylonian sabbath was celebrated on the 7th, 14th, 19th, 21st and 28th of the lunar month, and was associated with the worship of the moon-god Sin. The word "sabbath" means a day of rest for the heart of the god. It was a day of prayer and repentance. The garden of Eden is located in Babylonia, as the two rivers Euphrates and Tigris show. The word "Eden" is pure Assyrian. A Babylonian picture of a tree with a serpent, and a man and woman on each side, is probably the story of temptation and fall as seen in Gen., chap. 3. The ten antediluvian patriarchs can be compared with the ten antediluvian kings of Babylonia mentioned by Berossus. Zimmern has shown that the Hebrew names are, in part at least, a translation of those found in Babylonia. The ages of kings in the Baby-

¹⁷JENSEN, *Kosmologie*, and *Keilinschriftliche Bibliothek*, Vol. VI; KING, *Religion and Mythology*; RYLE, *Early Narratives of Genesis*; ZIMMERN, *Keilinschriften und das Alte Testament* (3d ed.).

lionian list are much greater than those given in Genesis. The Babylonian flood-legend has many close resemblances to the flood-story of Genesis. The name given to the tower where the confusion of tongues took place shows its position in Babylonia.

What is the historical connection between these two sets of narratives? A few scholars¹⁸ have believed in a common Semitic tradition from which the narratives in Genesis and Babylonia were derived. Still fewer¹⁹ think that Abraham, when he came from Ur in Babylonia, brought these stories with him. Most Assyrian investigators²⁰ are now quite agreed that the narratives in Genesis were derived from the Babylonian legends; but, as Professor Sayce says, "they are a paraphrase and not a translation." The distinct Babylonian coloring and character of the narratives in the Bible, the fact that those in Babylonia are much older than those found in Genesis, and the idea that Assyria and Babylonia regarded other nations as tribute-payers and so would not borrow their sacred legends from them—these three reasons preclude the idea that Babylonia borrowed the traditions from Israel. Probably no scholar now living believes that the Genesis narratives were the source from which the Babylonians drew their material. It is believed by some that Israel first found these stories in Canaan when they entered after the desert wandering. We know from the Amarna tablets that Babylonian culture was spread over Palestine centuries before the Israelites took possession of the land. Indeed, in this Amarna correspondence, fragments of two Babylonian legends have been found, which imply that they were well known among the peoples of Canaan. The Babylonian stories can be traced back as far as the age of Hammurabi (2250 B.C.), which seems to have been the golden age of Assyrian literature. Nothing shows Israel's religious grandeur more fully than the way these Babylonian stories have been purified of polytheism, of grotesque and mythological detail, and have been made the vehicle of the loftiest religious and ethical teaching for all time. To accomplish such a task reveals the highest kind of inspiration.

¹⁸ Dillmann, and others.

¹⁹ Jastrow, and others.

²⁰ Delitzsch, Zimmern, Jensen, Meissner, King, Sayce, and many others.

Archæology has contributed largely toward a better understanding of the primitive religion of the earliest Semitic peoples. The finds have consisted of temples, altars, arks, lists of offerings, sacred hymns, prayers, pictures of priests and others sacrificing, and inscriptions recording ideas about sin and a future life. The religious ideas, customs, rites, and ceremonies of the nomadic Arabs have been carefully studied, and much valuable information has been gathered.²¹ After a series of brilliant and scholarly studies Professor Robertson Smith held that the religions of the primitive Semites and Aryans rested ultimately upon a similar basis. This was not abstract monotheism or polytheism, but simply an unwritten code of religious observances by which it was thought the welfare of society could be secured. The most primitive form of sacrifice was probably a meal in which the worshiper offered up food to the god, and at the same time ate a portion himself. It was a communion of the man with his god, who was supposed to need food and drink like any human being. Every altar was simply a table on which the food for the god was placed. The gods were located in springs, rocks, trees, and in the tops of hills and mountains. Every community had its god and goddess, Baal and Ashtoreth, with whom it was supposed to be genetically related. Every want of man was transferred to his god. As Professor Margoliouth has shown,²² the gods, like men, needed residences, gifts, servants, food, sympathy, and entertainment. The gifts to the god expressed various ideas, such as thanks for past blessings, a request for new favors, or a desire for the god's good will and forgiveness. Some of the oldest Babylonian hymns²³ reveal a very lofty conception of sin and a deep sense of unworthiness. Many of them are comparable with the psalms of the Bible. The recently found law-book of Hammurabi, king of Babylon, 2250 B. C., contains laws in part the same as those found in the Pentateuch. King asserts²⁴ that the Babylonians

²¹ ROBERTSON SMITH, *Religion of the Semites*, and *Kinship, etc.*; WELLHAUSEN, *Reste, etc.*; FRASER, *Golden Bough*; CURTISS, *Primitive Semitic Religion Today*.

²² MARGOLIOUTH, *Religions of Bible Lands*.

²³ JASTROW, *Religion of Babylonia and Assyria*; ZIMMERN, *Busspsalmen*.

²⁴ KING, *Babylonian Religion and Mythology*.

and Assyrians possessed a system of morality which in many respects resembled that of the descendants of Abraham. The unique supremacy of Ashur in Assyria, Marduk in Babylonia, and Ra in Egypt was a feeling after monotheism. Professor Friedrich Delitzsch says²⁵ that the more enlightened minds regarded Nergal and Nebo, Sin and Shamash, Ramman and the other gods as being one in Marduk. Perhaps the same could be said of Ashur in Assyria, Ra in Egypt, and Zeus in Greece. The triumph of the god Marduk over the demonic dragon Tiamat, many believe, is referred to in the Old Testament in such passages as Isa. 51:9; Pss. 89:10 ff.; 74:12; Isa. 27:1; Job 40:40 ff.; Ps. 104:26; Isa. 30:6; Job 7:12; Ezek. 29:3, and Jer. 51:34. The name Rahab, leviathan, behemoth, and dragon are probably all designations of Tiamat.²⁶ Compare also Gen. 49:25 and Dan. chap. 7. Professor Gunkel finds the same Tiamat story in the New Testament book of Revelation, especially in chap. 12. It reached the Christian writer through Jewish tradition, where it had been worked over. The Babylonian abode of the dead, Allatu, "the land without return," is a counterpart of the biblical Sheol, and has the same characteristics. Most recent writers²⁷ on Old Testament religion and theology have drawn much from the material furnished by archæology, and so have been enabled to throw much light on the origin and significance of rites and ceremonies, customs and manners, in old Israel.

Archæology has done much for our knowledge of biblical geography.²⁸ There are mentioned in the Old Testament many cities, villages, hills, mountains, valleys, plains, rivers, brooks, lakes, and seas. It is certainly important to know something of their location in order to appreciate the references made to them in the Bible. Then, too, geography had very much to do in shaping the history and destiny of the people of Israel. The Old Testament is pre-eminently a book of the land. Half

²⁵ DELITZSCH, *Babel und Bibel*.

²⁶ GUNKEL, *Schöpfung und Chaos*.

²⁷ Marti, Smend, Schultz.

²⁸ G. A. SMITH, *Historical Geography of the Holy Land*; BUHL, *Geographie des alten Palästinas*.

a century ago we knew little about many geographical references in the Old Testament. Now all is changed. In 1865 the Palestine Exploration Fund was organized and has achieved great results. The west Jordan land has been carefully surveyed and also part of the east Jordan territory. Accurate maps have been prepared, under the direction of Conder and Kitchener, which must ever be the basis for Palestinian cartography. Nearly two hundred places west of the Jordan, previously unknown, have been located. Important excavations have been carried on at Jerusalem, Lachish, Gezer, and other places. The publications²⁹ of the society have been most valuable. The American Palestine Exploration Society was founded in 1870. Its work has been confined chiefly to the east Jordan territory. About one hundred places have been located. Several quarterly statements have been issued. In 1877 the German Palestine Association was established. It has conducted excavations on the southeast hill in Jerusalem, and in the northern part of the east Jordan land. Much important geologic and topographic work has also been done by this society. Its journal³⁰ contains many important articles. The Russian Palestine Society, instituted in 1882, combines scientific exploration and practical church work. Besides these organizations, there is a number of individuals who are privately carrying on explorations in Palestine.

What is thus true of the Holy Land is in a measure true of the geographical work being done in Babylonia, Assyria, Elam, Mesopotamia, Asia Minor, Arabia, and Egypt. In all these lands much has been accomplished in locating sites of places mentioned in the Old Testament. All these efforts are of the highest value, and are doing much for an accurate understanding of many biblical geographical references.

Archæology has done much to improve the mediæval views of the Old Testament. The past has made great contributions to biblical learning for which all must be devoutly thankful. Great scholars have given to the world results which will endure through all time. But with the gold has come a great

²⁹ *Palestine Exploration Fund Quarterly Statement*, and various books.

³⁰ *Zeitschrift des Deutschen Palästina-Vereins*.

deal of dross, which has tended to obscure the Old Testament and to make it a dead and uninteresting volume. The Bible was studied with no relation to the time, place, and circumstances in which it arose. Men formed opinions as to what the Bible should say, and then made the Scriptures conform to their preconceived ideas. Biblical study was deductive, not inductive. Texts were torn apart from chapter and book without regard to the context. Now all is fast changing. Archæology shows us that the Bible is a tree with many roots ramifying far and wide among other nations and peoples. The Old Testament has a most close historical relation with the centuries when it grew up. Archæology illuminates those centuries, and in so doing throws a flood of light on the Bible. The pick and the shovel are making the Bible a new volume full of thoughts that breathe and words that burn